



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Mid-Pacific Regional Office
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, California 95825-1898

IN REPLY
REFER TO:

MP-700
PRJ-1.10

JUN 5 2006

Mr. Michael Aceituno
Supervisor, Sacramento Area Office
National Marine Fisheries Service
650 Capitol Mall, suite 8-300
Sacramento, CA 95822

Subject: Request to Initiate Formal Consultation on Stage 1 of the South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP)

Dear Mr. Aceituno:

The Bureau of Reclamation, along with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), requests the initiation of formal Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation for Stage 1 of the SDIP. This action includes constructing and operating four permanent gates across Old River at its divergence from San Joaquin River, Old River near Tracy, Middle River, and Grant Line Canal; and dredging in Middle River, Old River, and West Canal in the south Delta. The modification of agricultural diversions is identified as a Stage 1 action in the SDIP Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR); however, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) have already issued Biological Opinions (BO) for this action.

Reclamation and DWR have been involved with an informal consultation process with the Service, NOAA Fisheries, and the California Department of Fish and Game since 2004, resulting in the development of the Action Specific Implementation Plan (ASIP). This ASIP (enclosed) will serve as the Biological Assessment (BA) necessary to enter into formal consultation with your agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the ESA.

A decision to increase the permitted diversion limit at Clifton Court Forebay has been deferred to Stage 2 of the SDIP. Early consultation for this action was completed through the Operations Criteria and Plan BA and BOs. Reclamation and DWR will publish additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents prior to making a decision on whether or not to pursue increased diversions. Formal consultation for any increase in diversions would be initiated once NEPA and CEQA documentation for Stage 2 is complete.

Subject: SDIP—Request to Initiate Formal Consultation on Stage 1

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If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Sharon McHale at 916-978-5086 or me at 916-978-5062.

Sincerely,



Alan R. Candlish
Regional Planning Officer

Enclosure

Identical Letter Sent To:

Mrs. Susan Moore
Field Supervisor, Region 1
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, CA 95825

cc: Mr. Paul Marshall, Supervisory Engineer
California Department of Water Resources
1416 9th Street, #215-30
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Ryan Olah, Chief
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, CA 95825

Mr. Jeff Stuart
Sacramento Area Office
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650 Capitol Mall, Suite 8-300
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